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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 28th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KHAN (Pakistan)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 88: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (continued)

(f) INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 89: ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 91: TRAINING AND RESEARCH

(a) UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE FOR TRAINING AND RESEARCH

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued)

Draft resolution A/C.2/49/L.22

1. Mr. NAADJIE (Ghana), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/49/L.22 entitled "Strengthening information systems for Africa's recovery and sustainable development" on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the sponsors hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

AGENDA ITEM 88: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (continued)

(f) INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (continued)

Draft resolution A/C.2/49/L.23

2. Mr. NAADJIE (Ghana), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, introduced draft resolution A/C.2/49/L.23 entitled "Programme for the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa" and underscored the importance attached to the industrialization of Africa in the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and, in 1991, in the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community. The General Assembly, in its resolution 48/214 of 23 December 1993, had urged all United Nations organs, organizations and programmes to integrate the priorities of the New Agenda in their mandates. He hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

AGENDA ITEM 89: ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (continued)

Draft resolution A/C.2/49/L.10

3. Mr. BLANEY (United States of America), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/49/L.10 entitled "Support for the Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment (GLOBE) Programme", said that Egypt and Israel were among the original sponsors of the text. Austria, Belgium, Congo, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mali, Micronesia, Morocco, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Tajikistan, Togo, Uganda and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland also had become sponsors.

4. He introduced the following oral amendment to the draft resolution: in paragraph 3, the words "including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)" should be inserted after the words "United Nations system"; paragraphs 6 and 7 should be replaced by the following text:

"6. Invites Governments to report to the Commission on Sustainable Development on their participation in the GLOBE Programme within the

implementation of Agenda 21, especially with regard to chapters 25, 36 and 40."

5. The GLOBE initiative was a school-based international science and education programme. Students would take environmental measurements at school and report their data to a processing centre. They would subsequently receive global environmental images and information created from their data and that of other GLOBE schools around the world. International scientists would select student measurements, and the results would be significant additions to the world environmental database. More than 80 countries had expressed interest in participating in the Programme. The Programme, which was a good example of unified international implementation pursuant to the action plan and the objectives of the Commission on Sustainable Development, also would benefit from the experience and expertise of various organizations of the United Nations system.

6. The United States would work bilaterally with partner countries to implement the GLOBE Programme. The draft resolution envisaged utilizing United Nations resources solely within the framework of the relevant activities of the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system.

Draft resolution A/C.2/49/L.24

7. Mrs. WILLIAMS-MANIGAULT (United States of America), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/49/L.24 entitled "Large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing and its impact on the living marine resources of the world's oceans and seas", said that Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas and Morocco had become sponsors. The draft resolution would follow up General Assembly decision 48/445 of 21 December 1993 on the subject, and she therefore hoped that it would be adopted by consensus.

Draft resolution A/C.2/49/L.20

8. Mrs. WILLIAMS-MANIGAULT (United States of America) announced that Bangladesh and Myanmar had become sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/49/L.20 entitled "Unauthorized fishing in zones of national jurisdiction and its impact on the living marine resources of the world's oceans and seas", which had been introduced at the 25th meeting, on 15 November 1994.

AGENDA ITEM 91: TRAINING AND RESEARCH

(a) UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE FOR TRAINING AND RESEARCH (A/49/14, A/49/634)

9. Mr. BOISARD (Acting Executive Director, United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)) said that as a result of the administrative and financial restructuring measures called for by the General Assembly in its resolution 47/227 of 8 April 1993, for the first time in a number of years, the General Fund had shown a surplus in its operations in 1993. A slight surplus was also expected in 1994.

10. A very careful and critical assessment of programmes had been carried out, and programmes which did not offer an evident comparative advantage had been eliminated while others had been redesigned to ensure that they were fully consistent with stated objectives; lastly, programmes which met clearly established training needs had been developed or consolidated. Research efforts had been reoriented to focus on the preparation and dissemination of original and innovative pedagogical materials, including distant-learning material, audiovisual material and various comprehensive training packages.

11. The restructuring effort had consistently pursued a balance between the entrepreneurial spirit and the rigours of administrative management, so as to avoid both a financial deficit and bureaucratic limitations. The positive outcome could be seen in the following figures: UNITAR organized more than 70 different programmes on four continents, in which 3,000 persons received over 500 full days of training annually.

12. The Institute was still in a delicate situation. With the present level of funding it could not undertake meaningful medium-term planning of training activities. The Institute intended to expand and further develop training programmes in management of international relations, diplomacy and multilateral negotiations, international cooperation, preventive diplomacy and peace-keeping. Furthermore, it had expanded its fellowship programmes in international law at The Hague, those on environmental law and policy at Nairobi, and those on preventive diplomacy, negotiation techniques and conflict resolution at Berg and Schlaining in collaboration with the Office for Legal Affairs, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the International Peace Academy respectively. The ongoing programmes on peace-keeping operations had also been expanded. UNITAR intended to establish a data bank which would permit the use of the experience acquired during the various operations.

13. Referring to the provisions of General Assembly resolution 47/227, he said that in 1995, with the approval of the Board of Trustees and if funds so permitted, a liaison office would be established in New York to meet the need for the presence of the Institute in that city.

14. Training programmes in the management of economic and social development were organized at the request of and in close cooperation with the relevant bodies and agencies of the United Nations system. Such programmes dealt with various aspects of environmental management and sustainable development, the legal aspects of international financial management and the prevention of specific types of catastrophes. UNITAR intended to cooperate even more closely, without prejudice to its international autonomy, with the United Nations funds and programmes including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNEP and with the secretariats of various international conventions.

15. UNITAR was making an urgent appeal to the United Nations to strengthen its administrative and logistical support and in particular to provide the premises required in New York, Geneva and perhaps in Vienna. Member States should remember that UNITAR needed broader and more stable financial support. In the past few years, the number of developing countries making voluntary

contributions to the General Fund had increased. The industrialized countries should demonstrate their confidence in UNITAR by doing likewise.

16. Mr. RUNGE (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union welcomed the Institute's intention to increase the efficiency of its programmes by making regular and strict assessments of their results. The European Union appreciated the fact that no deficit had accrued during the previous year and hoped that the quality of UNITAR training programmes would be improved further.

17. Mr. HOWLEY (United States of America) commended the Acting Executive Director for his efforts in restructuring and streamlining UNITAR in accordance with General Assembly resolution 47/227. He also noted the efforts to focus training activities on areas where the Institute had a comparative advantage and to increase inter-agency cooperation with respect to training within the United Nations system.

18. His delegation was satisfied that one year after the Institute's transfer to Geneva, the senior UNITAR fellows who had remained behind in New York had wound up their activities and that only one - who would manage the Institute's orientation training courses for diplomats and delegates to the United Nations - would be reappointed in 1995. Similarly, concerning the UNITAR liaison office in New York, referred to in General Assembly resolution 47/227, he supported the Secretary-General's decision to designate a focal point for UNITAR activities in the Secretariat's Department of Administration and Management. At the present time, the establishment of a full-time liaison office in New York was not justified. Such an office would only increase the financial burden on the Institute.

19. His Government was not yet convinced that the Institute's training activities could not be performed by other United Nations bodies. While it welcomed the reform efforts of the Acting Executive Director, it believed that the Institute must demonstrate that its programmes justified the expense of a separate United Nations agency. To that end, his Government would continue to follow UNITAR activities closely in the forthcoming year.

20. Ms. WONG (Australia) said that her country, through its membership of the UNITAR Board of Trustees, was committed to the continuation of the restructuring and streamlining of the Institute.

21. The Institute's training programmes were of high quality; that was particularly commendable in view of its current reduced resources.

22. Member States should provide the necessary resources to enable the Institute to develop its important training function. Her delegation also encouraged the Institute to develop and strengthen inter-agency cooperation in the relevant fields. In that regard, the invaluable contribution of non-governmental organizations from both developed and developing countries should be noted.

23. Australia was actively supporting the fellowship programme in peacemaking and preventive diplomacy which the Institute offered in collaboration with the International Peace Academy and encouraged Member States to support that important area of work.

24. Mr. KHAN BAHADUR (Pakistan) said that his country would have liked to see a greater analysis in the Secretary-General's report of the Institute's efforts to overcome the crisis it had faced two years previously.

25. While the transfer of UNITAR to Geneva had proved to be successful, the absence of a liaison office in New York was being felt. He urged the Acting Executive Director to do his utmost to ensure the full implementation of resolution 47/227, especially regarding the establishment of the liaison office.

26. Member States should contribute generously to the General Fund of the Institute on a regular and predictable basis in order to put the Institute in a better position to respond to the needs of all Member States. As UNITAR also fulfilled some essential training needs of the United Nations it was essential that it should receive financial support from the Organization.

27. Ms. KEPPLER (Austria) said that UNITAR had strengthened its links to other United Nations bodies as well as updated its training programmes and it should pay more attention to human rights issues in its activities.

28. The results of the restructuring of UNITAR had been more than encouraging. The range and quality of 125 different training ventures involving more than 4,600 people a year deserved the approval and wholehearted support of all Member States. The Institute could not but benefit from a definitive appointment of Mr. Marcel A. Boisard as Executive Director.

29. Her Government had hosted for the second time a fellowship programme in peacemaking and preventive diplomacy which provided excellent training for international and national civil servants, diplomats, military officers and representatives of non-governmental organizations who wished to improve their skills in conflict analysis and negotiation as well as mediation techniques. Vienna had a long-standing academic tradition of study in international relations, and would be an ideal venue for training courses targeting the diplomatic community of the Vienna International Centre and diplomats from neighbouring countries with economies in transition. The Vienna Diplomatic Academy and UNITAR were strengthening their cooperation in that field.

30. The lack of institutional capacity in the field of women's rights in countries with economies in transition had been highlighted at the Regional Preparatory Conference of the Economic Commission for Europe for the Fourth World Conference on Women. UNITAR could certainly play an important role in filling that void.

31. It was essential that the Secretariat continue providing logistical and administrative support to UNITAR in order to ensure continuity in the important work it was carrying out.

32. Mr. SHINODA (Japan) said that his country welcomed the implementation of the UNITAR training programmes and the fact that there had been no deficit in 1993 or thus far in 1994 thanks to the restructuring of the Institute. For that reason, his Government had decided once again to make a contribution of $100,000 to the Institute in 1994. However, further reform was needed. For example, the Institute's training activities should be improved, and closer and more practical cooperation should be promoted between it and other United Nations bodies and qualified national and international institutions. Also, UNITAR must address the single most important issue facing it: the strengthening of its General Fund.

33. In order to continue to attract support from industrialized countries, the Institute should promote its activities in ways that would ensure that those countries also derived benefit from them.

34. His delegation noted with satisfaction that UNITAR, in conjunction with the United Nations Secretariat, was organizing an orientation course for newly accredited diplomats and delegates to the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. The Secretary-General should take concrete measures with respect to the rental of the UNITAR premises at Geneva.

35. Mr. FASEHUN (Nigeria) said that his country was encouraged by the renewed effectiveness of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) in the areas of training and research, and particularly its programmes in multilateral diplomacy, peace-keeping and economic and social development, which had benefited many countries. During the period 1993-1994, UNITAR had held seminars on human rights and peace-keeping operations and had provided orientation to newly accredited diplomats at Geneva and in New York. Through its renewed programmes, UNITAR had ceased to be a moribund and forgotten institute and had become a research and pedagogical centre that was a vital part of the United Nations system.

36. While he welcomed the improvement in the finances of UNITAR, whose General Fund had shown a surplus, the Institute should be encouraged to continue its march towards solvency and its pursuit of scholarship programmes. To that end, the Institute needed additional financial resources and donor countries should increase their donations. At the same time, new donors should give generously to the Institute through the General Fund and by way of special purpose grants. As in the past, Nigeria would donate $32,000 in 1994.

37. The Secretariat had a role to play in enhancing the effectiveness of UNITAR. As a first step, it should heed the appeal of the Institute's Board of Trustees and return to UNITAR the sum of over $123,000 which had been deducted as rent in 1993. That matter, which had been long pending, should be resolved without further delay. In addition, the Secretariat should facilitate the work of the Institute's liaison office in New York by providing office space at no cost.

38. Mr. RUDENSKY (Russian Federation) said that UNITAR had begun to play its correct role in the United Nations system, had undergone a restructuring which had given greater focus to its activities and had placed its finances back on a sound footing.

39. The Russian Federation supported the idea of allocating office space to the Institute at no cost, which was the practice followed with other organizations of the United Nations system in similar situations. If the United Nations Office at Geneva charged rent, the Institute's financial situation and its ability to discharge its functions would be jeopardized.

40. The delegation of the Russian Federation had previously stressed the need to elaborate and organize training programmes for newly independent States and countries with economies in transition and it would welcome information on the measures that had been taken in that regard. It had also noted the important work done by the Institute in the field of training programmes on the legal aspects of financial and fiscal management. The Institute should elaborate programmes in that area, such as on the legal aspects of the relationship between national science research institutes and private companies, the privatization of the results of basic research, the modalities of the exercise of the right to intellectual property, taxation relating to science and technology, and the regulations governing the obtaining and use by scientists of national and international donations provided by Governments and international funds.

41. The Russian Federation shared the view that the science research activities of the Institute which were unrelated to training should be transferred to other bodies, such as the United Nations University (UNU). The University would thus be able to focus its efforts on science research activities related to the general processes of the world economy while the Institute would undertake training activities, including the training of diplomats, in socio-economic fields related to sustainable development. Such a division of labour would enhance the effectiveness of both UNITAR and UNU.

42. Mr. GONZALEZ (Chile) said that the efforts made to overcome the serious financial crisis which had plagued UNITAR for years were inadequate to ensure the normal functioning of the Institute, and it was essential for countries to increase their contributions in order to restore its activities to a normal level.

43. UNITAR had a broad range of activities in the field of training. In that connection, mention must be made of the informational meetings for delegates to the General Assembly and the orientation courses on the activities of the Security Council. UNITAR should introduce training courses in new areas, particularly those related to the environment. The training of instructors in the compilation and analysis of data on the environment and in the application of norms for the preparation of the national reports required under the most recent agreements could constitute the first step towards a systematic undertaking in that field.

44. In Chile's view, the coordination begun with UNU would prevent the duplication of functions and optimize results in their respective fields of activity: the Institute in training and UNU in research.

45. Mr. KIM (Republic of Korea) said that UNITAR had undertaken a commendable restructuring effort, which would help to enhance its efficiency and capabilities. It was now necessary to formulate programmes which focused on training and on training-related research activities. UNITAR should develop training programmes which were of greater benefit to Member States. In that regard, for example, the strengthening of the training programme in multilateral negotiations could be useful.

46. Given the low level of voluntary contributions, it would also be desirable to prioritize training programmes based on their comparative advantage and to develop high quality programmes in cooperation with relevant national and other institutions.

47. Mr. CHAVES (Kyrgyzstan) said that UNITAR was addressing the needs of newly independent countries, as demonstrated by its programme which was to begin the following day in the capital of Kyrgyzstan with the participation of three countries of Central Asia. Kyrgyzstan believed that, while savings were needed in the United Nations and in all of its agencies, there should be no skimping on resources in the matter of training.

48. UNITAR, as a non-profit institution, should have recourse to private enterprise in its search for assistance, as other United Nations organizations currently did.

49. Mr. BOISARD (Acting Executive Director of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)), replying to questions raised during the debate, said that UNITAR had succeeded in identifying its proper role and that its mandate and activities were now the correct ones. Since the Institute was not involved in operational matters, it could reflect on training and contribute concrete ideas to the United Nations. Its role was to provide conceptual frameworks and training methodologies consistent with the parameters indicated by the specialized agencies both within and outside the United Nations system.

50. The solution of the administrative and financial problems of UNITAR would make it possible to secure the necessary funding. A great deal of work still remained to be done in the developing countries and in the countries in economic and social transition. In that regard, he wished to draw attention to the seminars which were due to begin the following day on training in the legal aspects of international finances for officials from six countries of Central Asia with the participation of experts from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the World Bank and donor and recipient countries. The Institute also wished to introduce training in other fields, such as human rights, and it had taken note of some of the suggestions made, which could only be implemented if the resources were made available.

51. UNITAR had managed to secure financing for certain programmes from private foundations, particularly those in North America. Inter-institutional cooperation was essential for the elaboration of future programmes. The Institute should retain its autonomy and flexibility in order to be able to collaborate with UNU. UNITAR would examine to what extent it could benefit from the results of the research of UNU with a view to including those results in training programmes, and to what extent its own training programmes could benefit the research of UNU. The same criterion would be applied with respect to institutions in the developing countries of Latin America, Africa and Asia.

52. The CHAIRMAN said that the general debate on sub-item (a) of agenda item 91 has thus been concluded.

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.